

CLAIMS

1. An apparatus comprising:

a transmodulator unit comprising (i) a first input configured to receive a baseband video signal, (ii) a second input configured to receive a first encoded data signal and (iii) an output configured to present a second encoded data signal, wherein (i) said second encoded data signal is generated in response to said first encoded data signal and said baseband video signal, (ii) said first encoded data signal comprises an advanced data signal and (iii) said second encoded data signal comprises a legacy data signal.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein (i) said baseband video signal comprises embedded programming information and (ii) one or more operations of said transmodulator unit are controlled in response to said embedded programming information.

3. The apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:

a set-top box configured (i) to generate said baseband video signal in response to said second encoded data signal and

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5 (ii) to embed said programming information in said baseband video signal.

4. The apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising:

a splitter comprising (i) an input port coupled to said set-top box, (ii) a first output port coupled to said
5 transmodulator unit and (iii) a second output port coupled to a video device.

5. The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said programming information is embedded in a vertical blanking interval of said baseband video signal.

6. The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said transmodulator unit further comprises:

a conversion circuit configured to convert said baseband video signal from an analog form to a digital form; and

5 an extraction circuit configured to extract said embedded information from said digital form of said baseband video signal.

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7. The apparatus according to claim 6, wherein:

said extraction circuit is further configured to decode
said embedded programming information.

8. The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said
transmodulation circuit is configured to communicate with said set-
top box using MPEG signal elements that do not contain information
of a program to be displayed.

9. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

said first encoded data signal comprises at least one of
(i) an MPEG4 signal and (ii) a digital data signal; and

said second encoded data signal comprises at least one of

5 (i) a MPEG2 signal and a MPEG signal.

10. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said
transmodulator unit is implemented as a single integrated circuit.

11. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said
second input of said transmodulator unit is further configured to
connect to at least one of (i) a low noise block (LNB) of a

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satellite dish or other antenna, (ii) an over the air (OTA) antenna
5 and (iii) a cable television signal.

12. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said advanced data signal comprises at least one of (i) an 8PSK, 16QAM or similar digitally modulated signal and (ii) a Turbo, LDPC (low density parity check) or other similar coded signal.

13. A transmodulator unit configured to support baseband video signaling in a set-top box local loop connection comprising:

means for receiving a baseband video signal comprising programming information embedded in at least one of a vertical
5 blanking interval and a chroma portion of said baseband video signal; and

means for controlling said transmodulator unit in response to said embedded programming information.

14. A method for baseband video signaling in a set-top box local loop connection comprising the steps of:

(A) receiving a baseband video signal comprising embedded programming information; and

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5 (B) controlling a transmodulator unit in response to
said embedded programming information.

15. The method according to claim 14, wherein said
embedded programming information is encoded.

16. The method according to claim 14, wherein said
programming information is embedded in said baseband video signal
in a set-top box connected to said transmodulator unit.

17. The method according to claim 16, further comprising
the steps of:

coupling said set-top box to an input port of a splitter;
coupling said transmodulator unit to a first output port

5 of said splitter; and

coupling a display device to a second port of said
splitter.

18. The method according to claim 14, wherein said
programming information is embedded in a vertical blanking interval
of said baseband video signal.

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19. The method according to claim 14, further comprising the steps of:

converting said baseband video signal from an analog form to a digital form; and

5 extracting said embedded information from said digital form of said baseband video signal.

20. The method according to claim 19, further comprising the step of:

decoding said embedded programming information..

21. The method according to claim 17, further comprising the step of:

embedding said programming information in said baseband video signal such that display of said baseband video signal on
5 said display is unaffected.

22. The method according to claim 16, wherein the step (B) comprises:

controlling transmodulation of a video signal from an advanced format to a legacy format of said set-top box.